

Deaths of Missing Woman, Abused Baby Resolved With Guilty Plea, Prison Sentence

Rape cases and weapons case also handled by DOJ prosecutors

Cortez Hamilton, 35, of Smyrna faces a prison sentence of 15 years to life after pleading guilty to Murder Second Degree for the 2015 killing of his wife. Cortez Hamilton killed his wife, Keisha Hamilton, in January 2015 at their home south of Smyrna, and then fled to Indiana with their two children, where he was apprehended by the Indiana State Police after a nationwide Amber Alert. As part of Cortez Hamilton's guilty plea, he was required to provide the location of Keisha Hamilton's body, which had not been found. Utilizing the information provided, State Police discovered human remains near Smyrna, and testing by the Division of Forensic Science is ongoing to positively identify the remains. Sentencing by a Superior Court judge is scheduled for March 28. Deputy Attorneys General Stephen Welch and Lindsay Taylor prosecuted the case, with investigation by the Delaware State Police Homicide Unit.

A 48-year-old Harrington man was sentenced to at least 15 years in prison for the death of an infant who was under his care. James Hammond and his girlfriend were caring for his girlfriend's niece, 7-month old Aubri Thompson, while the child's parents were on vacation. The child was brought to the couple's Harrington residence on February 25, 2014 and was taken to Milford Memorial Hospital by Hammond and his girlfriend on February 28, 2014, suffering from blunt force trauma to her head and serious traumatic brain injuries. The child was pronounced dead one hour after she arrived at the hospital. James Hammond was found guilty of Murder by Abuse Second Degree by a jury in November 2017. A Superior Court

judge sentenced Hammond to 25 years in prison, suspended after serving 15 years, followed by 6 months of work release and 2 years of probation. Deputy Attorneys General Stephen Welch and Stephen Smith prosecuted this case.

Richard White, 41, of Wilmington faces 25 years to life in prison after pleading guilty to rape charges. White began an inappropriate relationship with an underage female and had sexual intercourse with her repeatedly over the course of 5 years. Deputy Attorney General Diana Dunn secured a guilty plea to Rape Second Degree. New Castle County Police Detective John Adams investigated the case. Sentencing is scheduled for April.

Deputy Attorney General Kathleen Dickerson secured a guilty verdict on all counts from a jury trial in Superior Court for William Reynolds, 45, of Millington, Maryland. Reynolds raped and assaulted a woman in her home in Clayton in November 2016. Reynolds was found guilty of 5 counts of Rape First Degree, 1 count of Rape Third Degree, and Strangulation. During jury deliberation and when the jury returned its verdict, Reynolds did not appear in court and was reportedly found dead, but identification has not been completed. DOJ Investigator Pete Fraley and Social Worker Lorraine Freese assisted with this case.

Deputy Attorneys General Zach Rosen and Nichole Warner secured a guilty plea from a New Castle man for a weapons charge, and he now faces a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison. Michael Garnett, 43, pled guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited and agreed that he is eligible for habitual offender status in Superior Court. In December 2015, Garnett was pulled over in a traffic stop for suspicion of drug dealing in the New Castle area. During the vehicle search, he was found to have a loaded handgun. A motion will be filed to declare Garnett a habitual offender based on previous convictions of Carrying Concealed Deadly Weapon, Burglary Second Degree, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission

of a Felony, and Maintaining a Vehicle for Keeping Controlled Substances. Sentencing is scheduled for April 20.